



TELUS Mental Health Index.

Canada | Q1 2026

Table of contents

1. What you need to know: Q1 2026	3	3. The Mental Health Index by province	13	6. Overview of the TELUS Mental Health Index	30
2. The Mental Health Index	5	4. The Mental Health Index by industry	15	Methodology.....	30
Mental health risk	6			Calculations.....	30
Mental Health Index sub-scores.....	7	5. Spotlight	16	Additional data and analyses.....	30
Anxiety	8	The relationship between			
Isolation.....	9	MHI scores and productivity	16		
Work productivity	10	Presenteeism.....	18		
Financial risk.....	11	Employer support for wellbeing.....	19		
Mental health by gender and age	12	Barriers to mental health support	21		
Mental health by employment status.....	12	Workplace culture	25		
Emergency savings.....	12	Turnover	27		
		Adoption of AI at work.....	27		

What you need to know: Q1 2026.

Mental health has plateaued at a persistently low baseline.

Mental health among workers in Canada remains at 63.1, unchanged from September 2025. This plateau follows a period of volatility in late 2025, and a stagnant score at this level is a signal for concern, with anxiety and isolation remaining the most significant challenges. Key indicators from this period include:

- 34 per cent of workers have a high mental health risk; 44 per cent moderate; 22 per cent low
- All mental health sub-scores have either declined or held flat from September 2025, except for optimism and general psychological health
- Anxiety and isolation have been the lowest mental health sub-scores for nearly four years
- 35 per cent of workers report feeling anxious; 32 per cent feel isolated; 27 per cent report feeling depressed
- 32 per cent of workers lack emergency savings to cover basic needs, up two percentage points from the previous period
- 31 per cent of workers report that their mental health is negatively affecting work productivity, also up two points
- Mental health scores have improved in Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, but have declined across all other provinces compared to September 2025
- Managers continue to score higher than non-managers, and labourers score lower than both service industry and office workers

Younger workers disproportionately report unmet mental and physical health support needs.

At least one in four workers reports unmet needs related to mental or physical wellbeing support. Workers under 40 are nearly twice as likely as those over 50 to want better mental health support and are 70 per cent more likely to want better physical health support.

- 27 per cent of workers believe their employer could better support physical health; 25 per cent say the same for mental health
- Workers wanting better mental health support **score 18 points lower** on the Mental Health Index than those who do not need additional support; these workers also **lose 48.1 days per year in productivity**, 26 more days than workers who do not require additional support
- 30 per cent of workers report no need for additional employer support; this group is older, non-managerial, and does not include parents
- Non-managers are 70 per cent more likely than managers to report needing no additional support, though managers are more likely to report concern about the stigma associated with seeking help



Cost is the most cited barrier to accessing mental health support.

Nearly half of workers identify cost or affordability as a barrier to accessing mental health support. Nearly one in five cite long wait times or limited availability of care.

- 45 per cent of workers citing cost as a barrier **score 21 points lower** on the Mental Health Index and **lose 19 more days per year in productivity** compared to workers who report no barriers
- Workers who report a lack of energy as their primary barrier to seeking care have the lowest mental health score, and **lose more than double the productivity days** of workers facing no barriers
- Workers over 50 are nearly three times more likely than those under 40 to report facing no barriers to accessing support

AI adoption is growing, with outcomes varying by employer support and frequency of use.

Four in 10 workers report that their employer supports or encourages AI use in the workplace, with nearly as many remaining neutral.

- 47 per cent of workers use AI tools at least several times per month
- Workers under 40, parents, and managers are more likely to use AI tools several times per week
- 56 per cent of workers who use AI report improved efficiency
- Managers are 50 per cent more likely than non-managers to report both improved efficiency from AI tools and employer encouragement of AI use

Outcomes differ substantially based on whether workers perceive their organisation's culture as supportive of their wellbeing.

Six in 10 workers describe their organisation's culture as supportive of their wellbeing; those who **don't lose 28 more days of productivity** annually.

- Workers who feel their organisation's culture does not support their wellbeing **score 20 points lower** on the Mental Health Index and **lose 28 more days per year in productivity**
- 13 per cent of workers are considering leaving their jobs; this group **scores 15 points lower** and **loses 20 more days annually in productivity** compared to workers not considering leaving
- 23 per cent of workers are uncertain about whether to leave; they **lose 17 more days per year** and **score nearly 15 points lower** than workers who are not considering leaving
- Better career opportunities, higher compensation, and improved benefits are the primary drivers of turnover intention

In this report, **productivity loss** refers to the number of workdays lost per year due to physical health issues and/or emotional or mental health challenges. Some fluctuations in productivity are inevitable, as employees naturally experience varying levels of efficiency throughout their workday.

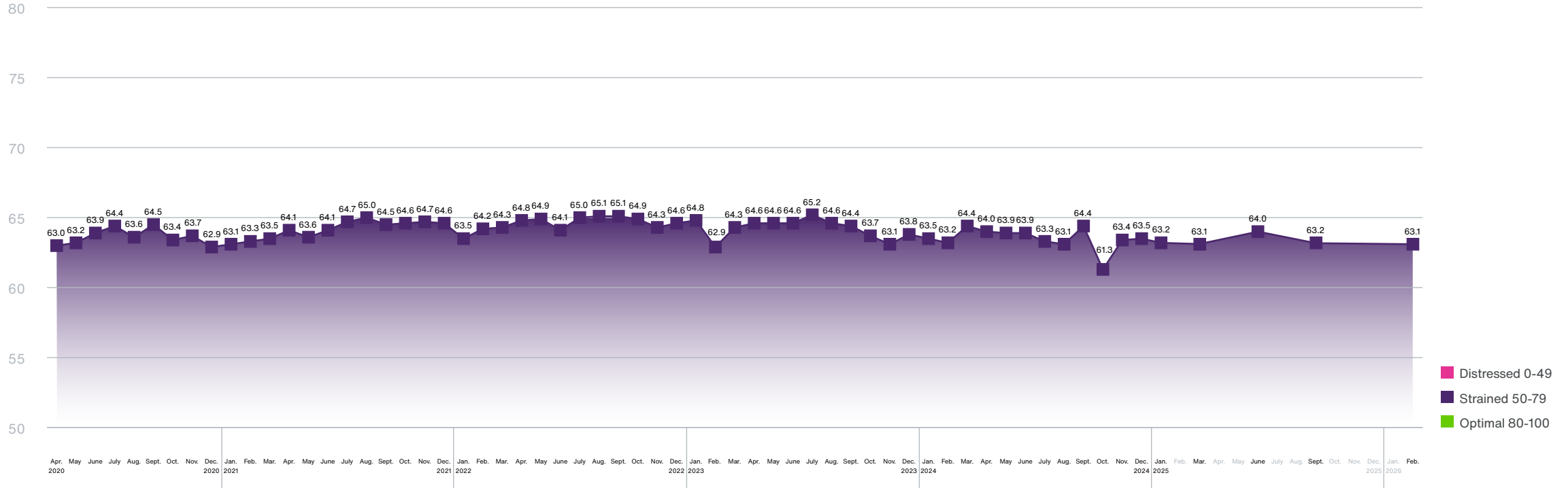


The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) score for the first quarter of 2026 is **63.1**.

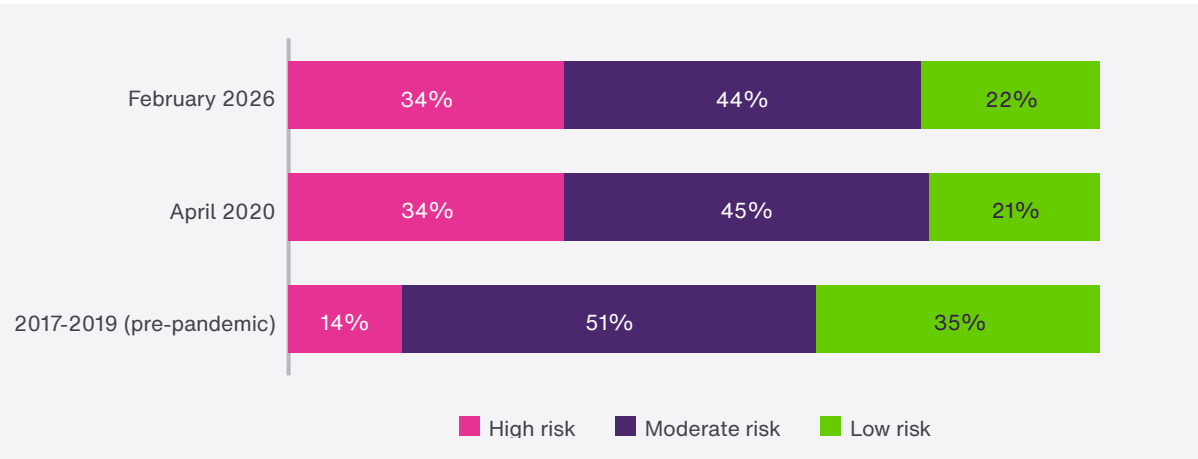
Workers in Canada experienced equal gains and declines in mental health between March and September 2025, with the mental health score unchanged from September 2025 through the first quarter of 2026.

MHI Current Month February 2026	September 2025
63.1	63.2



Mental health risk.

In the first quarter of 2026, 34 per cent of workers have a high mental health risk, 44 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 22 per cent have a low mental health risk. Nearly six years after the launch of the Mental Health Index in April 2020, the proportion of workers in the high-risk group is unchanged.



Approximately 30 per cent of workers in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven per cent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one per cent of workers in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.

Mental Health Index sub-scores.

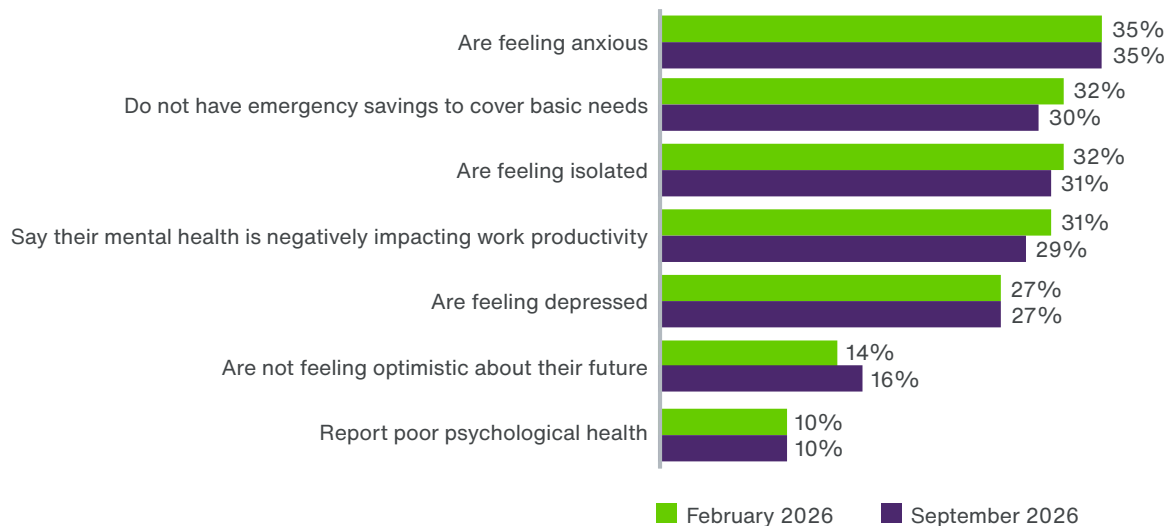
For nearly four years, anxiety (55.5) has consistently ranked as the lowest Mental Health Index sub-score, followed by isolation (58.8), work productivity (60.8), depression (61.2), optimism (65.8), and financial risk (66.3). General psychological health (71.8) remains the highest-performing mental health measure as of February 2026.

- Anxiety and isolation have remained the lowest mental health sub-scores for nearly four years
- With the exception of optimism and general psychological health, all mental health sub-scores either remain unchanged or have declined compared to the previous period

More than one-third (35 per cent) of workers feel anxious, 32 per cent do not have emergency savings for basic needs, 32 per cent feel isolated, 31 per cent say their mental health is negatively impacting work productivity, 27 per cent feel depressed, 14 per cent do not feel optimistic about their future, and 10 per cent of workers cite poor psychological health.

Mental Health Index Sub-scores	February 2026	September 2025
Anxiety	55.5	55.5
Isolation	58.8	59.6
Work productivity	60.8	61.6
Depression	61.2	61.4
Optimism	65.8	64.9
Financial risk	66.3	67.4
Psychological health	71.8	71.4

Percentage at risk by MHI sub-score



Anxiety

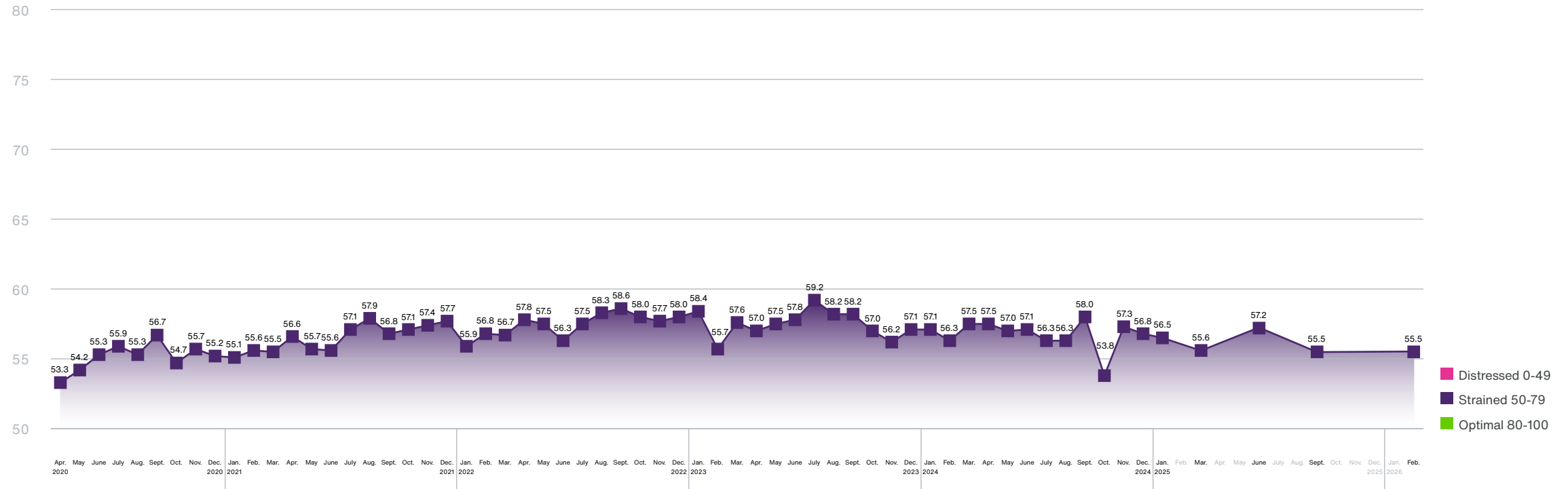
In the first quarter of 2026, 35 per cent of workers report often feeling unsettled and nervous.

After peaking in July 2023, the anxiety sub-score has generally declined through February 2026, with brief improvements in September 2024 and June 2025. The score fell by nearly two points from June to September 2025 and remains unchanged in the first quarter of 2026.

Anxiety is the lowest mental health sub-score for nearly four years.

Sub-score
February 2026

55.5



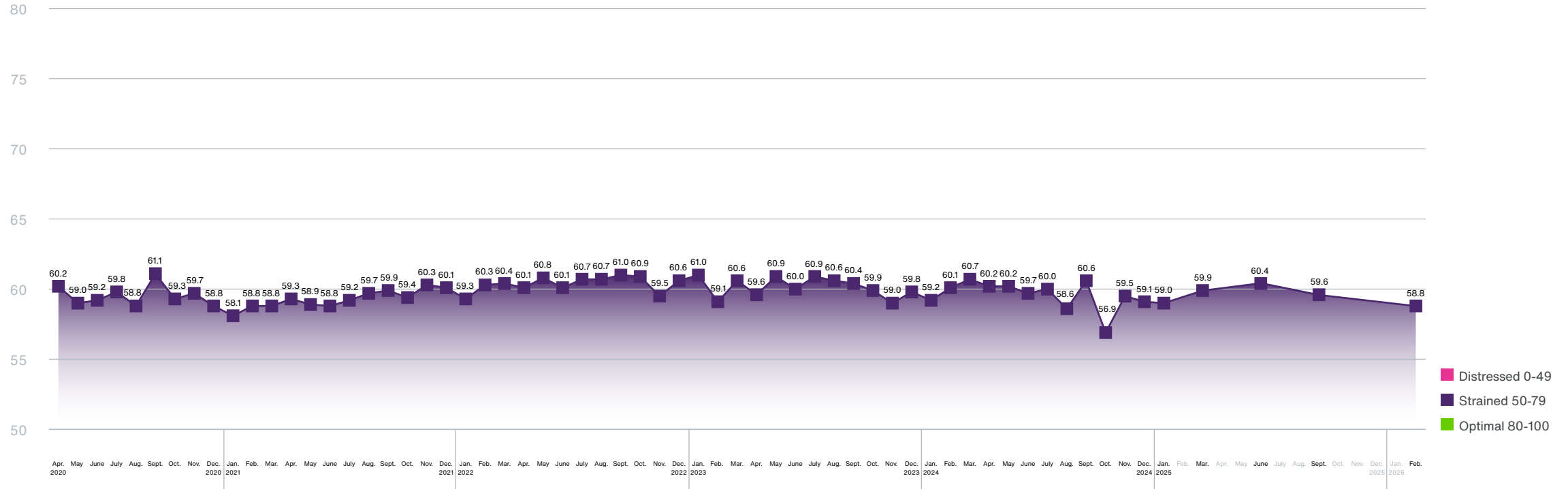
Isolation

In the first quarter of 2026, 32 per cent of workers report often feeling alone.

After reaching its lowest point in October 2024, the isolation sub-score recovered through June 2025 and has since declined by nearly two points through the first quarter of 2026. It remains the second-lowest mental health sub-score for nearly four years.

Sub-score
February 2026

58.8



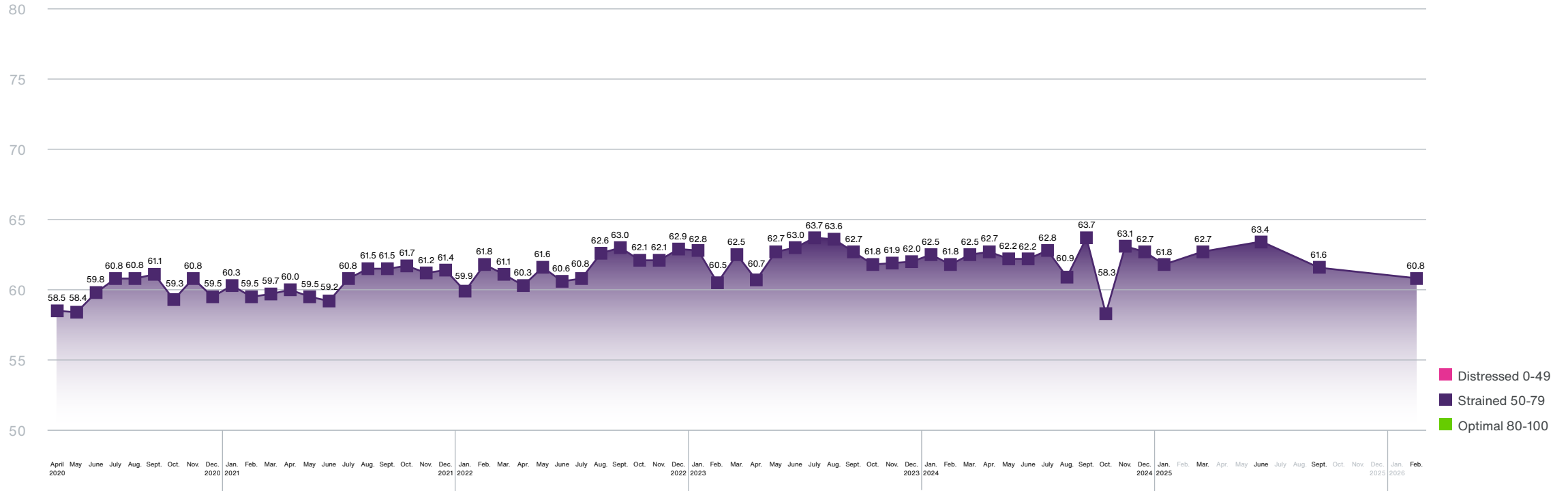
Work productivity

In the first quarter of 2026, 31 per cent of workers say their mental health is negatively affecting their work productivity and goals.

After peaking in September 2024, the work productivity sub-score fell to its lowest level in October 2024. Despite a rebound in November 2024, it fluctuated through September 2025 and, in the first quarter of 2026, continues to decline.

Sub-score
February 2026

60.8



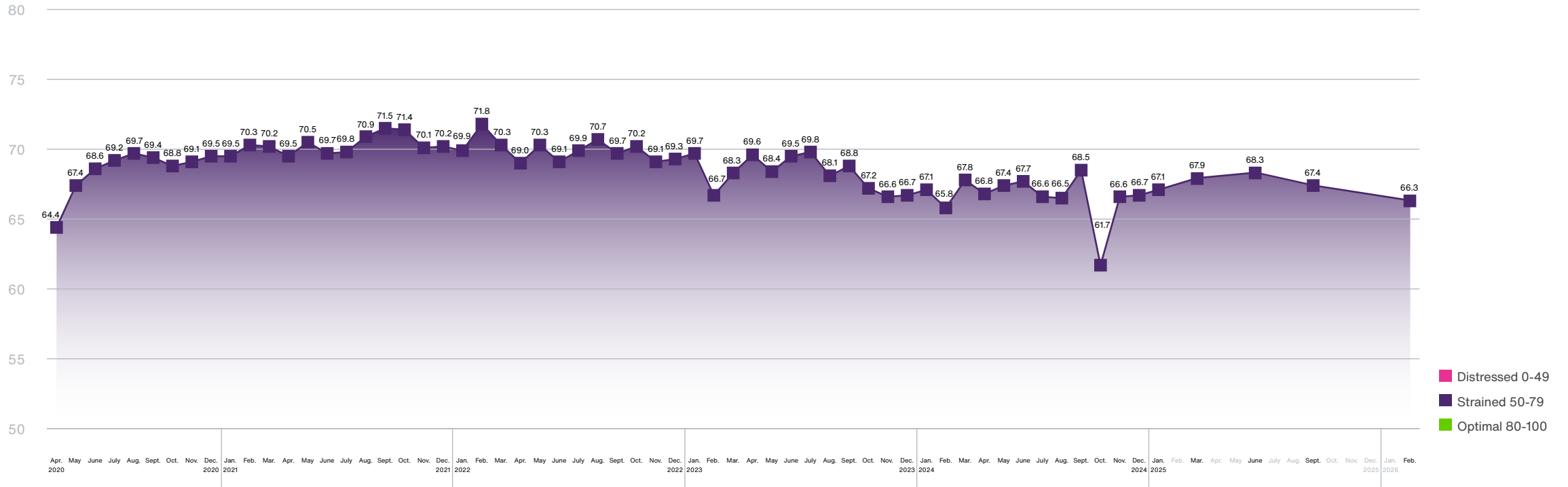
Financial risk

In the first quarter of 2026, 32 per cent of workers do not have emergency savings for basic needs.

The financial risk sub-score showed gradual improvement from April 2020 to February 2022. Since then, some volatility has been observed, including lows in February 2023 and February 2024, as well as a dramatic 6.8-point decline in October 2024. The financial risk score rebounded in November 2024 and continued to improve incrementally through June 2025 before declining in September 2025. In the first quarter of 2026, financial risk continues to decline, down one point from September 2025.

Sub-score
February 2026

66.3



Mental health by gender and age.

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had significantly lower mental health scores than men. In the first quarter of 2026, the mental health score for women is 60.5, compared with 65.7 for men
- Since April 2020, mental health scores have improved with age
- Differences in mental health scores between workers with and without minor children have been reported since the launch of MHI in April 2020. Nearly six years later, this pattern persists with a lower score for workers with at least one child (59.5) compared to workers without children (64.8)

Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, four per cent of respondents are unemployed¹ and nine per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Workers reporting reduced salary compared to the previous month have the lowest mental health score (51.3), followed by workers reporting fewer hours than the last month (54.4), respondents not currently employed (59.7), and workers with no change to salary or hours (64.1)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (63.3) than non-managers (62.9)
- Labourers have a lower mental health score (61.9) than service industry (62.7) and office workers (63.9)
- Respondents working for companies with 1,001-5,000 employees have the highest mental health score (65.5)
- Respondents working for companies with 501-1,000 employees have the lowest mental health score (60.6)



Emergency savings

- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (49.6) than the overall group (63.1). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 69.6

¹ MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

The Mental Health Index by province.

In the first quarter of 2026, mental health scores in Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Ontario have improved, while scores in other provinces have declined compared to September 2025.

- With a modest 0.7-point increase, Saskatchewan has the highest mental health score (67.9) in the first quarter of 2026
- The lowest mental health score is in Alberta (61.7), down 0.9 points from September 2025

Province	February 2026	September 2025	Change
Saskatchewan	67.9	67.2	0.7
Ontario	63.2	62.8	0.4
Quebec	63.3	63.2	0.1
The Maritimes	62.2	62.3	-0.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	61.8	62.2	-0.4
Manitoba	63.9	64.5	-0.6
Alberta	61.7	62.6	-0.9
British Columbia	63.1	64.0	-0.9

Numbers highlighted in pink are the lowest/worst scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in green are the highest/best scores in the group.



Employment status	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	64.1	64.0
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	54.4	54.0
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	51.3	54.3
Not currently employed	59.7	63.7

Age group	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Age 20-29	54.4	53.8
Age 30-39	57.8	58.3
Age 40-49	59.5	59.3
Age 50-59	64.5	65.0
Age 60-69	71.4	71.8

Number of children	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
No children in household	64.8	64.4
1 child	59.4	61.9
2 children	60.0	59.7
3 children or more	58.3	57.8

Gender	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Men	65.7	65.8
Women	60.5	60.7

Household income/annum	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
<\$30K	53.8	52.6
\$30K to <\$60K	59.0	58.4
\$60K to <\$100K	61.8	62.0
\$100K to <\$150K	63.8	64.7
\$150K or more	69.2	69.6

Employer size	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Self-employed/sole proprietor	65.0	61.8
2-50 employees	61.6	63.6
51-100 employees	61.8	60.6
101-500 employees	63.2	62.9
501-1,000 employees	60.6	61.9
1,001-5,000 employees	65.5	64.5
5,001-10,000 employees	63.4	62.2
More than 10,000 employees	64.2	65.0

Manager	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Manager	63.3	64.3
Non-manager	62.9	62.3

Work environment	Feb. 2026	Sept. 2025
Labour	61.9	60.9
Office/desk	63.9	63.6
Service	62.7	63.5

Numbers highlighted in pink are the lowest/worst scores in the group.
Numbers highlighted in green are the highest/best scores in the group.

The Mental Health Index by industry.

Workers in Food Services have the lowest mental health score (57.1), followed by workers in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (57.6), and Technology (59.0).

Workers in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (68.8), Educational Services (66.5), and Wholesale Trade (65.8) have the highest mental health scores in the first quarter of 2026.



Industry	February 2026	September 2025	Change
Administrative and Support Services	60.6	55.5	5.1
Utilities	64.6	59.6	5.0
Food Services	57.1	53.0	4.1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	62.3	59.1	3.2
Information and Cultural Industries	60.3	58.3	2.0
Media and Telecommunications	61.9	59.9	2.0
Finance and Insurance	65.4	64.3	1.1
Warehousing	64.9	63.8	1.1
Wholesale Trade	65.8	64.7	1.1
Other	64.5	63.6	0.9
Educational Services	66.5	66.0	0.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	61.1	60.9	0.2
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	68.8	68.8	0.0
Automotive Industry	62.8	62.8	0.0
Other services (except Public Administration)	61.6	62.1	-0.5
Manufacturing	63.6	64.6	-1.0
Retail Trade	62.8	63.8	-1.0
Public Administration	62.7	64.0	-1.3
Construction	61.8	63.4	-1.6
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	62.7	64.5	-1.8
Transportation	63.0	65.9	-2.9
Accommodation	60.7	63.7	-3.0
Technology	59.0	63.5	-4.5
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	57.6	67.2	-9.6

Spotlight

The relationship between MHI scores and productivity.

Productivity losses are calculated using an assessment of four key metrics:

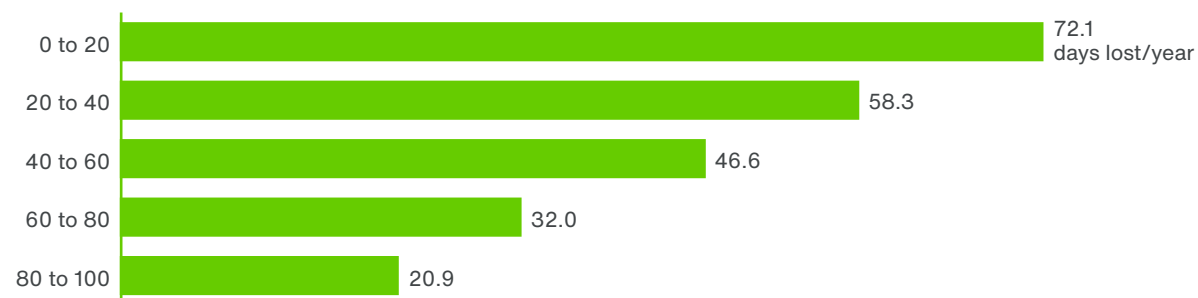
1. Work effort when feeling well
2. Absenteeism when feeling unwell
3. Instances of working when feeling unwell (commonly referred to as Presenteeism)
4. Work effort when feeling unwell

Productivity loss is reported as a percentage of working time lost and as the number of workdays lost per year, based on a standard 240-day work year.

- Mental health scores are strongly correlated with productivity. Workers with lower mental health scores experience greater productivity loss, while those with higher scores experience less productivity loss
- Three in 10 (29 per cent) workers have a mental health score of 50 or lower. The productivity loss of this group is at least two and a half times the number of lost workdays as 22 per cent of workers with a mental health score of 80 or higher



Productivity loss in working days per year by MHI score

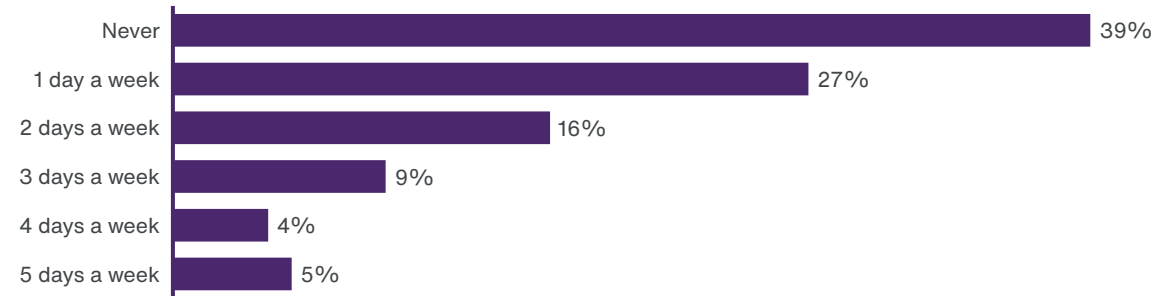


Presenteeism

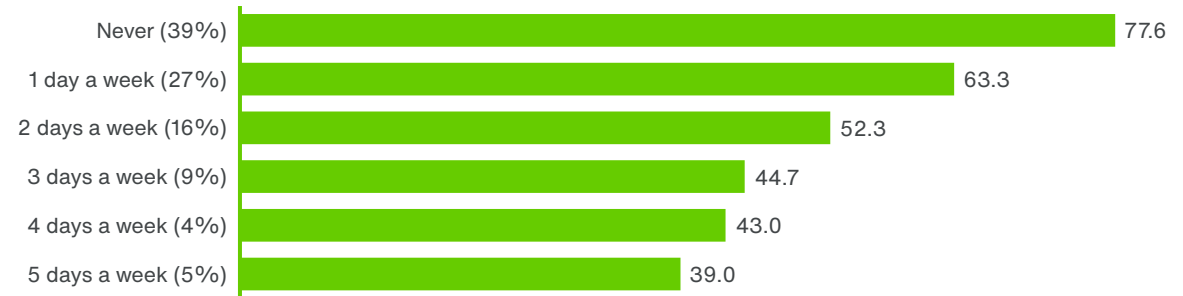
Presenteeism refers to productivity loss when someone is working while unwell. More than six in 10 workers report doing their jobs at least one day per week while feeling unwell.

- 61 per cent of employees report working while feeling unwell at least one day per week; this group has significantly lower mental health scores and experiences greater productivity losses compared to workers who never work while unwell
- The highest mental health score (77.6) is among 39 per cent of workers who never work while unwell, more than 14 points higher than the national average (63.1)
- Workers over 50 are more than twice as likely as workers under 40 to report never working while unwell
- Non-parents are 60 per cent more likely than parents to report never working while unwell

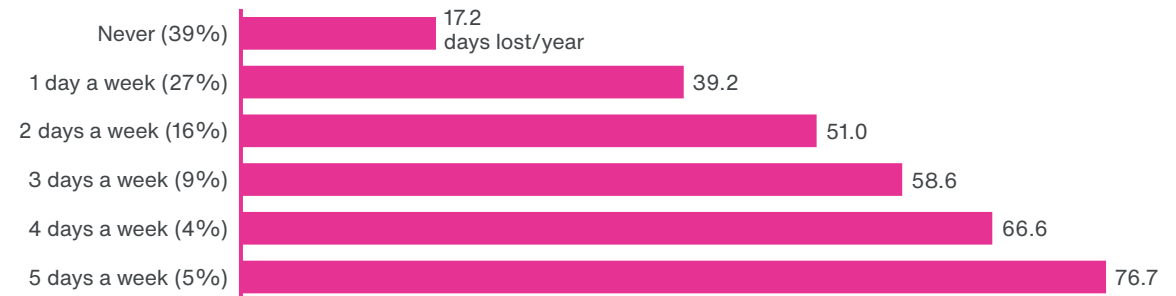
In a typical week, how often do you do your job feeling mentally or physically unwell?



MHI score by “In a typical week, how often do you do your job feeling mentally or physically unwell?”



Productivity Loss by “In a typical week, how often do you do your job feeling mentally or physically unwell?”



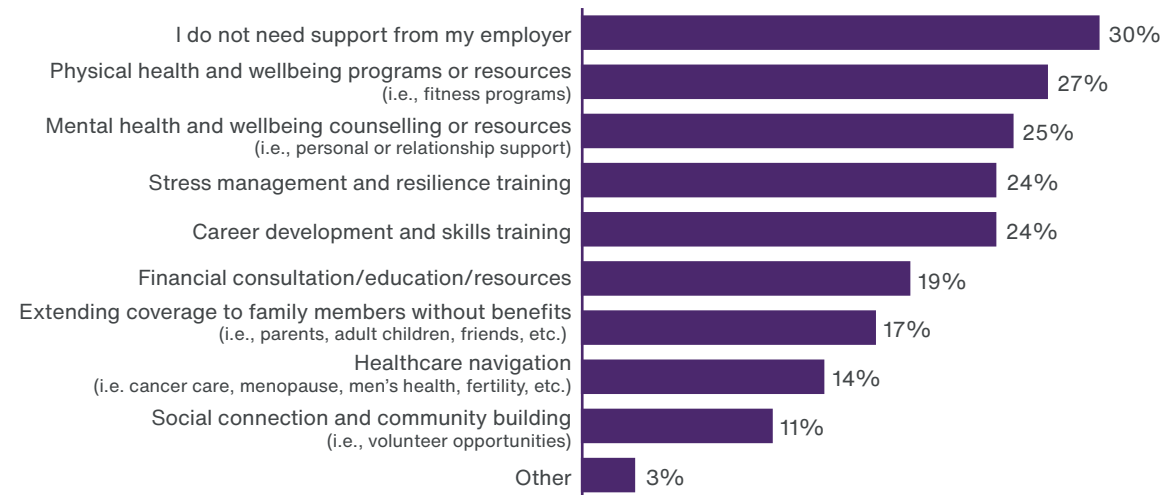
Employer support for wellbeing.

At least one in four workers wants better support for their mental and physical health.

- More than one-quarter (27 per cent) of workers say their employer could provide better support for their physical health; 25 per cent want better mental health support, 24 per cent want stress management and resilience training, 24 per cent want career development and skills training, and 19 per cent want better support with financial resources, education or consultation
- Workers under 40 are nearly twice as likely as workers over 50 to want better support for their mental health
- Workers under 40 are 70 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to want better support for their physical health

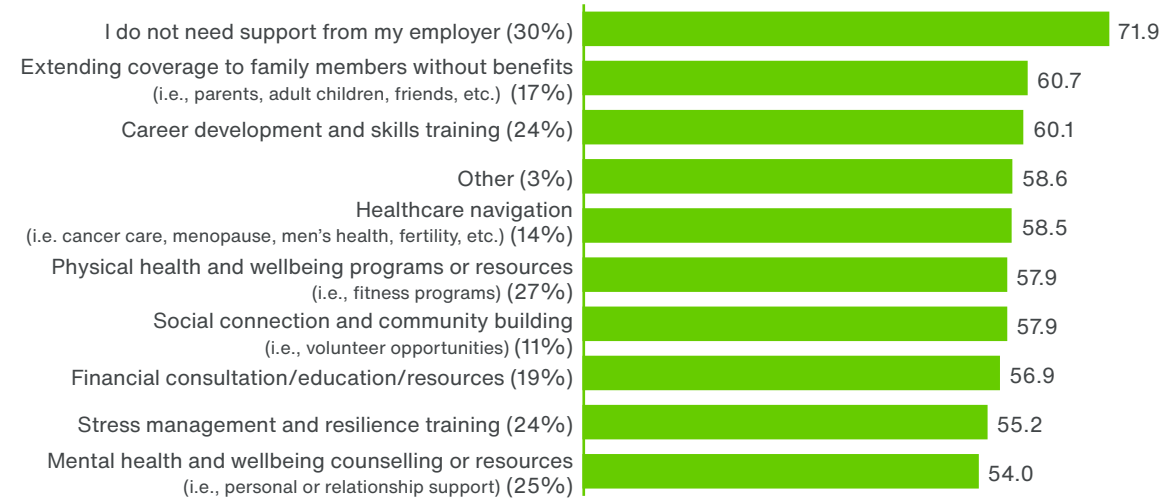


Are there any areas where you feel your employer could provide better support?

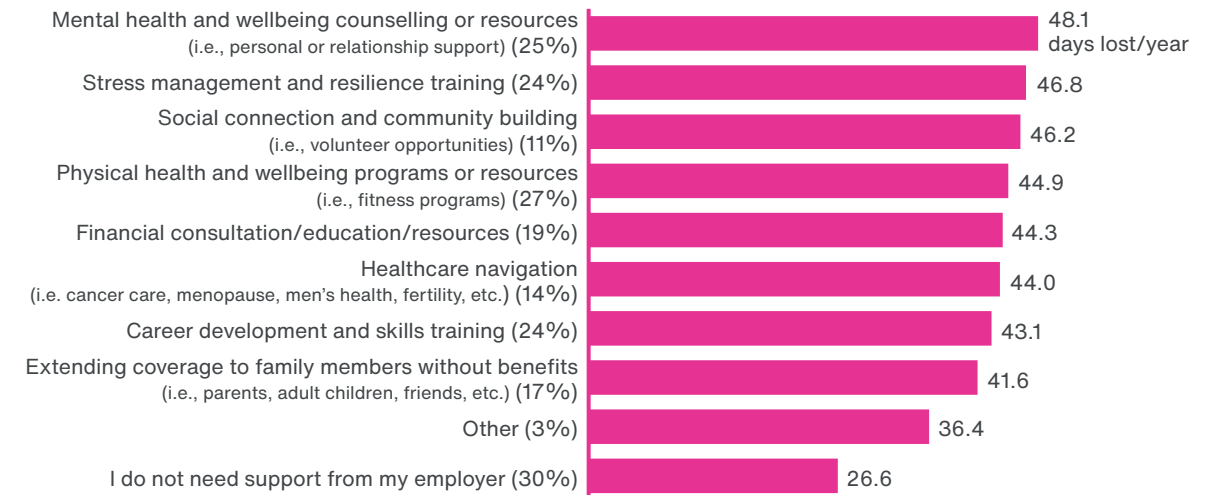


- The lowest mental health score (54.0) is among 25 per cent of workers wanting better support for their mental health, 18 points lower than workers not needing support from their employer (71.9), and nine points lower than the national average (63.1)
- Workers wanting better support for their mental health have an annual productivity loss of 48.1 days, nearly 22 days more compared to those requiring no support (26.6 working days per year)
- Workers over 50 are nearly three times more likely than workers under 40 to say they don't need support from their employer
- Non-parents are more than twice as likely as parents to say they don't need support from their employer
- Non-managers are 70 per cent more likely than managers to report they don't need support from their employer

MHI score by “Are there any areas where you feel your employer could provide better support?”



MHI score by “Are there any areas where you feel your employer could provide better support?”

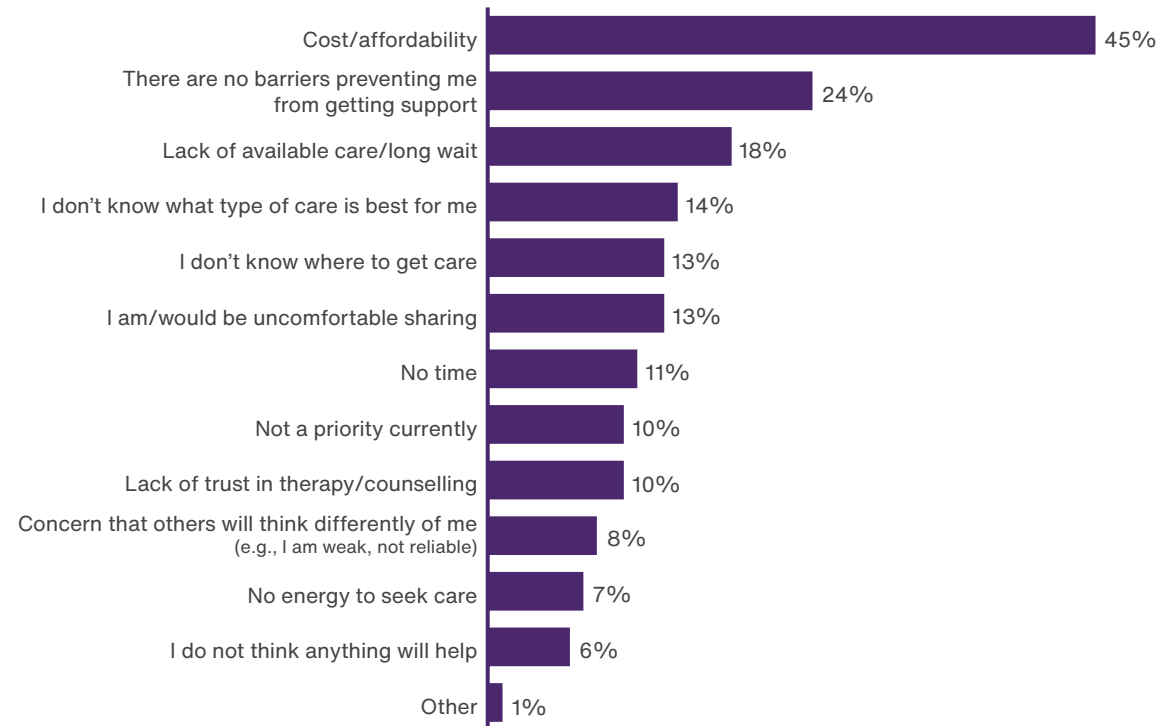


Barriers to mental health support.

Cost/affordability and lack of available care/long wait times prevent workers from getting mental health support.

- Nearly half (45 per cent) of workers say cost/affordability is preventing them from getting mental health support, 18 per cent say it's a lack of available care or a long wait, 14 per cent don't know what type of care is best, and 13 per cent don't know where to get mental health care
- Managers, parents, and workers under 40 are 50 per cent more likely to be concerned that others will think differently of them if they seek mental health support
- Workers over 50 are nearly three times more likely than workers under 40 to report that there are no barriers to support
- Non-parents are twice as likely as parents to report that there are no barriers to support

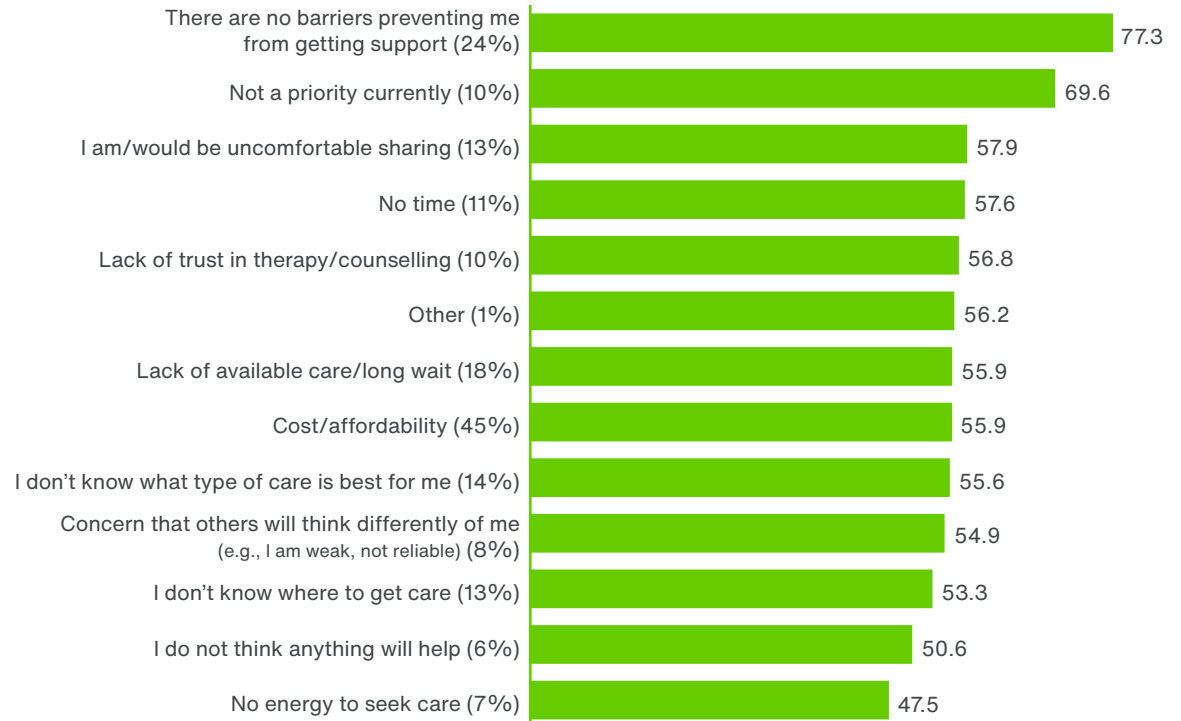
What would prevent you from getting mental health support if you needed it?



- The highest mental health score (77.3) is among 24 per cent of workers reporting there are no barriers to getting mental health support, more than 14 points higher than the national average (63.1)
- The lowest mental health score (47.5) is among seven per cent of workers who do not have the energy to seek care, nearly 30 points lower than workers reporting no barriers to support (77.3) and nearly 16 points lower than the national average (63.1)



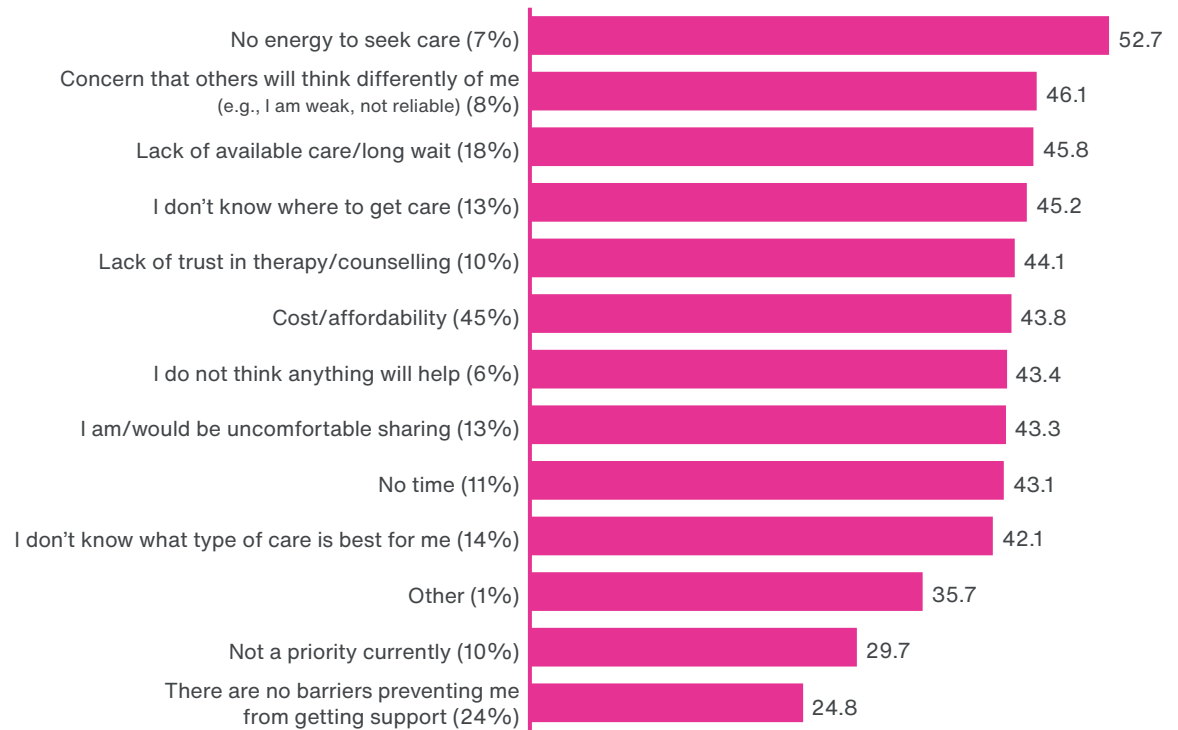
MHI score by “What would prevent you from getting mental health support if you needed it?”



- Workers reporting no barriers to support have an annual productivity loss of 24.8 days, 28 days fewer compared to those lacking the energy to seek care (52.7 working days per year)



Productivity Loss by “What would prevent you from getting mental health support if you needed it?”

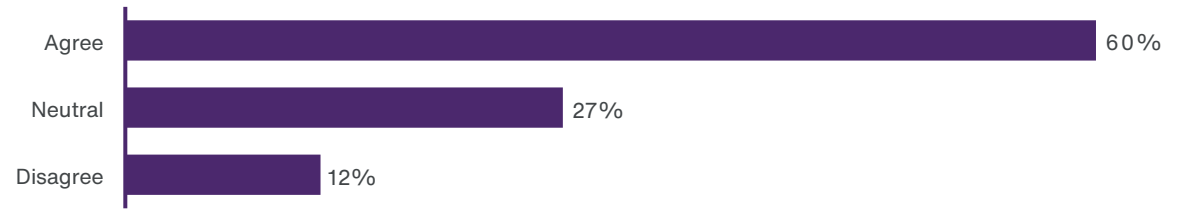


Workplace culture

Only six in 10 workers believe their organisation’s culture supports their wellbeing.

- Six in 10 (60 per cent) perceive their workplace culture as supportive of their personal wellbeing; this group has the highest mental health score (67.9), nearly five points higher than the national average (63.1)
- More than one in ten (12 per cent) do not perceive their workplace culture as supportive of their personal wellbeing; this group has the lowest mental health score (48.0), 20 points lower than workers who perceive their workplace culture as supportive (67.9) and 15 points lower than the national average (63.1)
- Workers who perceive their workplace culture as supportive of their personal wellbeing have an annual productivity loss of 31.3 days; 28 days fewer compared to workers who perceive it as unsupportive (59.3 working days per year)

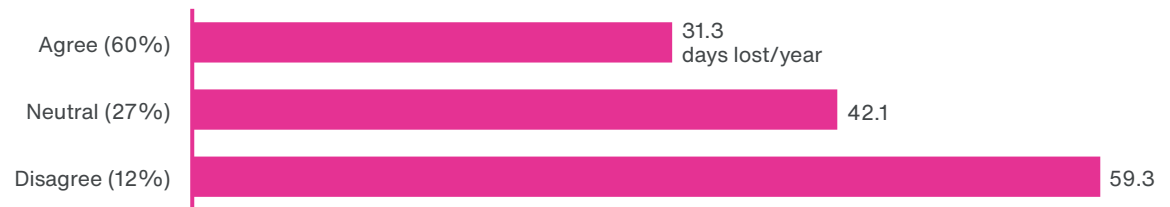
The workplace culture at my organisation supports my personal wellbeing



MHI score by “The workplace culture at my organisation supports my personal wellbeing”



Productivity Loss by “The workplace culture at my organisation supports my personal wellbeing”

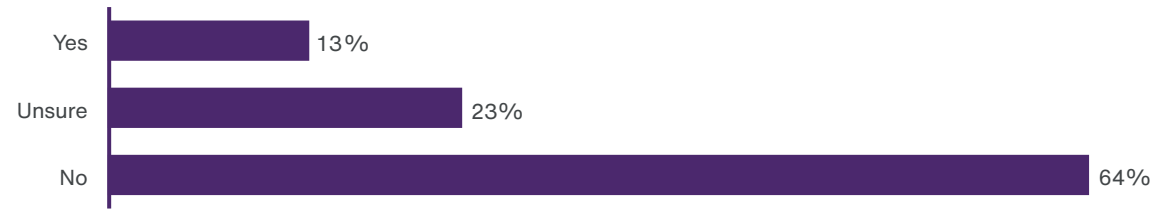


Turnover

More than one-third of workers are considering leaving their jobs or are uncertain about doing so.

- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of workers are not thinking about leaving their jobs; this group has the highest mental health score (68.6), more than five points higher than the national average (63.1)
- Nearly one in seven (13 per cent) workers are thinking about leaving their jobs; this group has the lowest mental health score (53.5), 15 points lower than workers who are not thinking of leaving their jobs (68.6), and nearly 10 points lower than the national average (63.1)
- Workers not considering leaving their jobs have an annual productivity loss of 30.9 days, a difference of 20 days compared to workers considering a change (50.8 working days per year)

Are you thinking of leaving your job?



MHI score by “Are you thinking of leaving your job?”



Productivity Loss by “Are you thinking of leaving your job?”

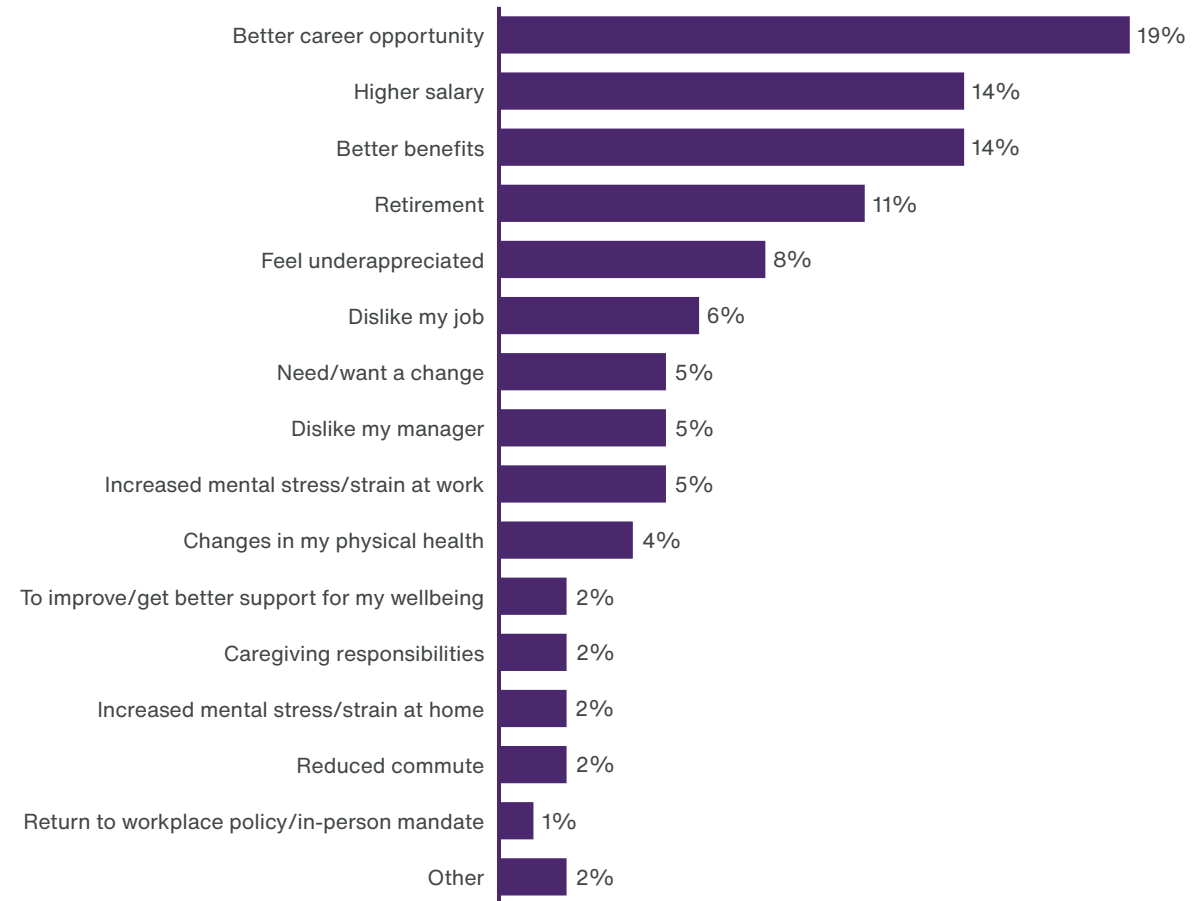


Better career opportunities, higher salaries, and better benefits are the primary drivers of turnover.

- Nearly one in five (19 per cent) workers who are thinking of leaving say better career opportunities are the primary reason for considering leaving their jobs, 14 per cent say it's for a higher salary, and 14 per cent say better benefits are the reason
- Workers under 40, parents, and managers are more likely to report better career opportunities and better benefits as the reasons for leaving their jobs



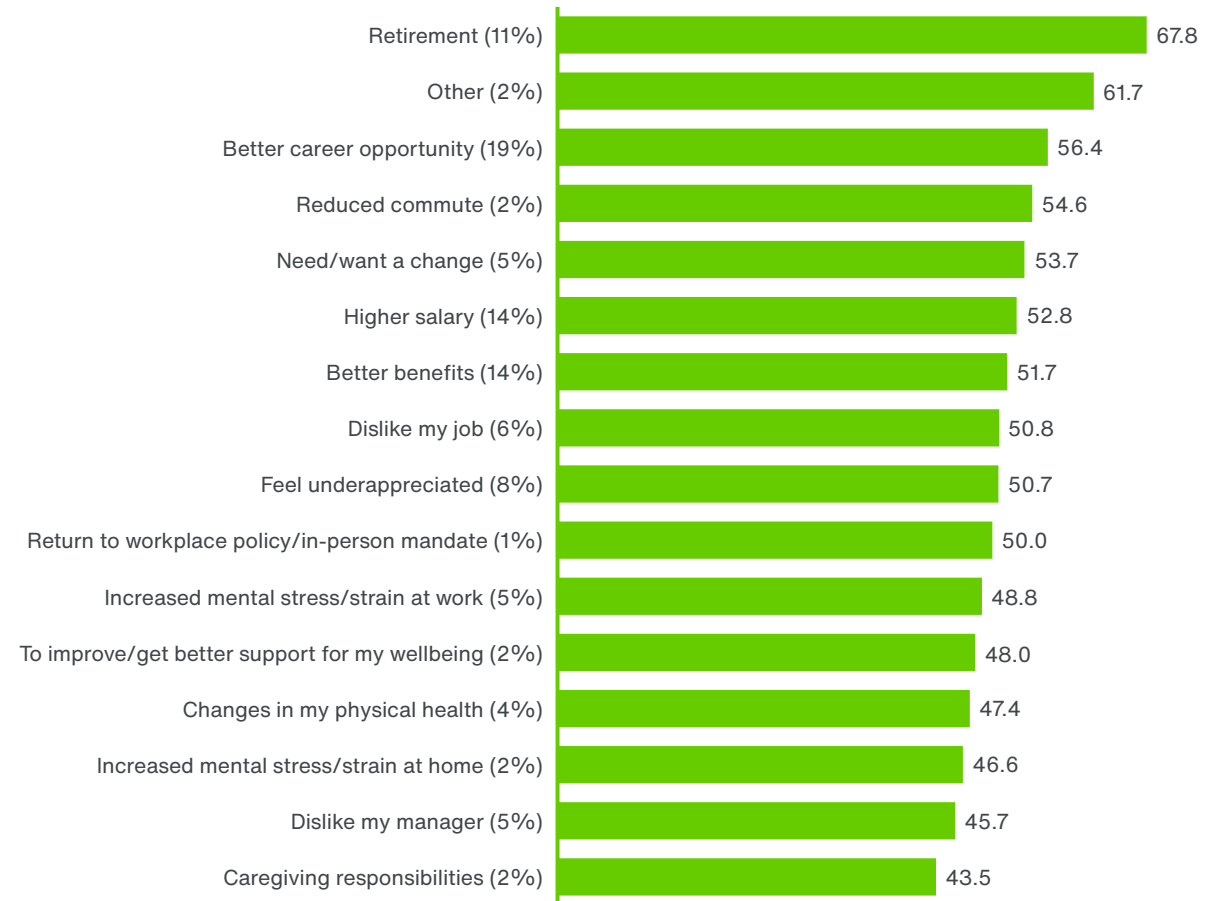
What is the primary reason you are thinking of leaving your job?



- The mental health score of 14 per cent of workers considering leaving their jobs for better benefits (51.7) is more than 11 points lower than the national average (63.1); this group also experiences a productivity loss of 44.3 days annually

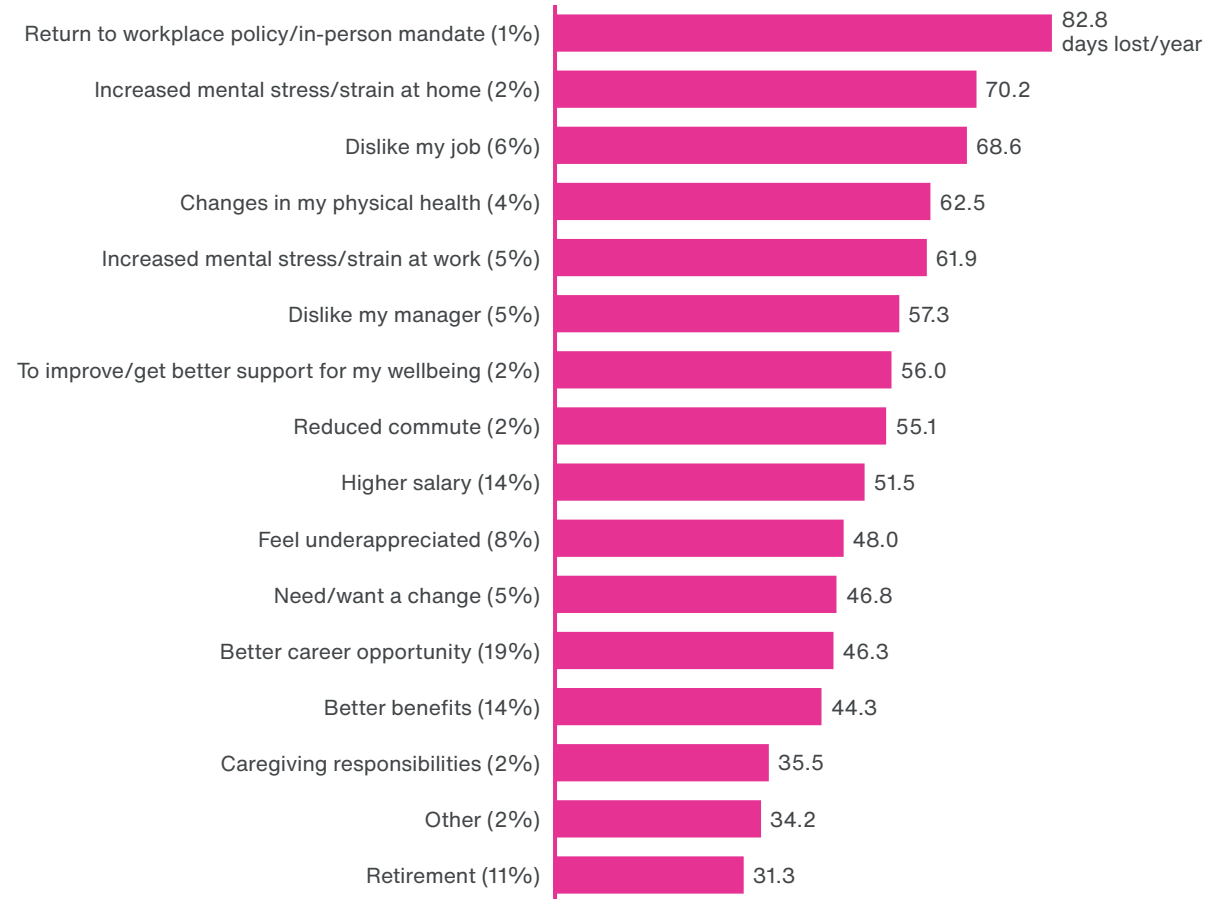


MHI score by “What is the primary reason you are thinking of leaving your job?”





Productivity Loss by “What is the primary reason you are thinking of leaving your job?”



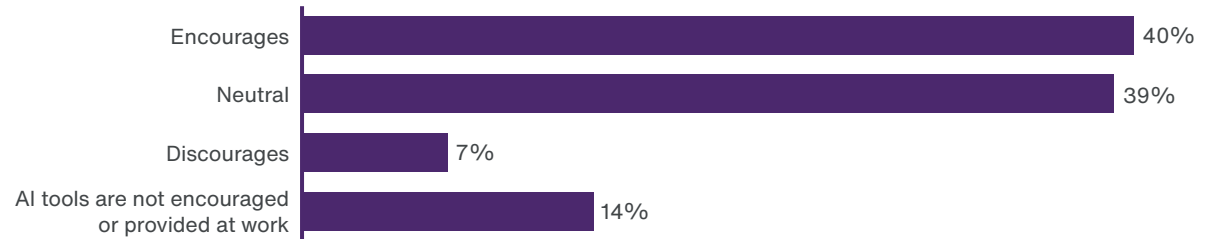
Adoption of AI at work.

Two in five workers are encouraged to use AI tools in their work.

- Nearly equal proportions of workers report that their employer encourages AI use (40 per cent) or are neutral on the matter (39 per cent); mental health scores are similarly comparable (63.4 and 63.0, respectively) and align with the national average (63.1)
- Managers are 50 per cent more likely than non-managers to say their employer supports or encourages the use of AI tools in their work
- The lowest mental health score (55.0) is among seven per cent of workers reporting their employer discourages the use of AI tools in their work, more than eight points lower than workers whose employers encourage AI tools (63.4) and nearly eight points lower than the national average (63.1)



To what extent does your employer support or encourage the use of AI tools in your work?



MHI score by “To what extent does your employer support or encourage the use of AI tools in your work?”

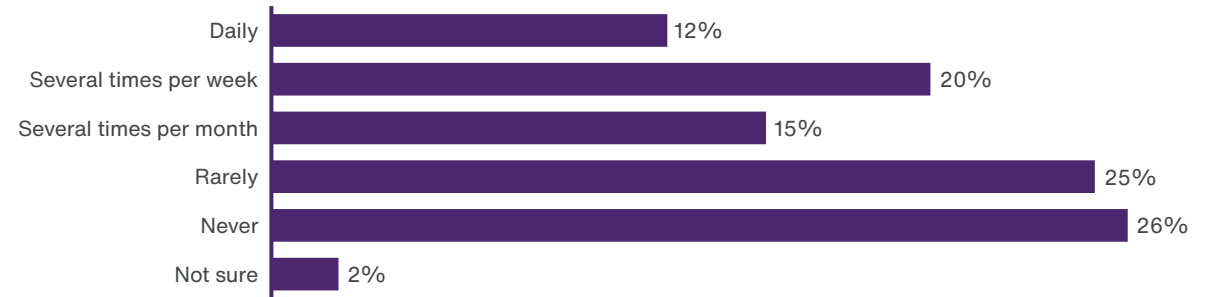


Among workers who use AI tools or technologies at work, more than half report improved efficiency.

- One-third (32 per cent) of workers use AI in their work at least several times per week; a further 15 per cent use AI in their work several times per month
- More than half (56 per cent) of workers using AI report improved efficiency
- Managers are 50 per cent more likely than non-managers to report that AI tools/technologies have improved their efficiency at work



How often do you use AI tools or technologies in your current job?



How would you describe the impact of AI tools/technologies on your efficiency at work?



MHI score by “How would you describe the impact of AI tools/technologies on your efficiency at work?”



Overview of the TELUS Mental Health Index.

The mental health and wellbeing of a population are essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index measures the current mental health status of employed adults. Increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by businesses and governments.

The Mental Health Index report has two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index (MHI).
2. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 3,000 people who live in Canada and are currently employed or who were employed within the last six months. Participants are selected to represent the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in Canada. Respondents are asked to consider the previous two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report were collected between February 25 and March 9, 2026.

Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to convert individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. The distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

Distressed 0 - 49 **Strained** 50-79 **Optimal** 80 - 100

Additional data and analyses.

Demographic breakdowns of sub-scores and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any subgroup is available upon request. Contact MHI@telushealth.com





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